

Manyonga eyes the legendary Lewis line

Ockert de Villiers

JOHANNESBURG: South African long-jump king Luvu Manyonga's flight path will be directed at the 8.79-metre mark at the 2018 IAAF World Indoor Championships in Birmingham tomorrow.

The line represents the 34-year-old world indoor record held by American legend Carl Lewis and while it may seem daunting, Manyonga is confident the gravity-defying leap is within reach.

"It will depend on how the body feels and the travelling but I am quite excited about going there to break the world indoor record," Manyonga said ahead of his departure for the championships.

"It is my first world indoors and it will be great to break the world record at my first world championships."

Manyonga posted a new continental record of 8.40m in Metz, France, last month



LUVU MANYONGA:
First world indoors

which launched him to the top of the global indoor rankings.

World silver medallist Jarriion Lawson of the US has put up his hand as Manyonga's main challenger by leaping to the second-best jump of the year of 8.38m.

Cuban pretender Juan Miguel Echevarría, 19, has emerged as a real threat after finishing second behind Manyonga at the Metz meeting with a personal best 8.34m.

Although world bronze medallist Ruswahl Samaai has

not jumped in competition this year, his pedigree alone should make him a real challenger for a medal.

South Africa will have a full complement of long-jumpers at the championships after legendary jumper Khotso Mokoena received a wildcard invitation for winning the 2017 European Indoor tour long-jump title.

Mokoena won the 2008 world indoor title and was fifth at the 2006 edition in Moscow.

Emile Erasmus, who was set to race in the 60m, has withdrawn from the team, leaving SA women's 60m record-holder Carina Horn as the remaining sprinter in the team.

Horn set a new SA 60m indoor record last month with a time of 7.09 seconds in Metz.

She first shaved 0.05sec off the record Wendy Hartmann clocked in 1999 in Maebashi, Japan, before shaving a further 0.01 off the time in Metz.

Horn's time ranks her

eighth in the world this year which has instilled belief she may have a shot at a medal.

"It has always been my goal to compete in a major final but the statistics were sort of against me," the Tuks sprinter said.

"Now is the first time that according to the statistics, I have a realistic chance to go through to the final."

SA 110m hurdles record holder Antonio Alkana will be hoping to make the final at his second world indoors for a shot at a medal.

Women's distance ace Dominique Scott-Efurd will fancy her chances of good performances after she lowered both her national 1500 and 3000m indoor records last month with times of 4min 07.25sec and 8:41.18 respectively.

The 3000m should be her strongest event with her time ranking her 12th in the world, while she is 20th in the 1500m on the global rankings.